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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Owner of Real Estate Financing Firm Charged with Fraud**

***Guzman accused of taking \$167,500 in advance fees for loans that were never made ...***

**SALT LAKE CITY, Utah** – The Utah Attorney General's Office filed criminal charges today against Pacific Aaron Guzman, of Salt Lake, for taking advance fees for commercial loans which were never made. The charges allege Guzman told the borrowers that if they paid him an advance fee, he would perform the necessary due diligence to get loans approved. One borrower was told her \$10,000 advance fee would get her a \$66 million loan to produce a movie. Other borrowers planned to develop real estate, build a hotel in Hawaii, and purchase a residential care center. Most of the projects had to be abandoned after no loans were secured. Guzman is alleged to have taken \$167,500 from seven prospective borrowers.

According to the charging documents, Guzman was president of Pacific Lending Group, which claimed to be the largest investment banking firm that provides capital and financial services for commercial real estate projects around the world. The company claimed it could secure loans for a wide variety of commercial projects. Individuals or companies seeking commercial loans were required to pay a fee to Pacific Lending, in advance of the loan. The fee purportedly was to cover the costs of performing the necessary due diligence to secure funding for the project.

The charges allege that Guzman falsely represented that he would secure commercial loans for the investors, when he made no effort to do so; that the required advance fee was to cover the cost of due diligence, when in fact the funds were used for personal expenditures; and that Pacific Lending was a commercial lender, when it had no funds to lend. When soliciting the advance fees, Guzman allegedly failed to disclose that he had been convicted of crimes in 1992 and 1998, had filed for bankruptcy three times, and owed outstanding civil judgments.

Guzman is charged with seven counts of communications fraud for misrepresenting information to borrowers and not disclosing his prior disciplinary history; seven counts of theft for using investor funds for personal expenses, and one count of engaging in a pattern of unlawful activity.

*Note: defendants accused of criminal charges are presumed innocent until proven guilty at trial or after entry of a guilty plea.*